

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 /064 R

DRAFTED BY AF/C:RRSTRAND:GJB

APPROVED BY AF/C:WLCUTLER

EUR/WE:HMOEN (INFO)

----- 008946

R 022248Z MAY 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:PFOR, PINT, CG, US

SUBJECT: REPORTED GOZ RESTRICTION OF PLANS OF WORSHIP

1. JOHN PRICHARD, STAFF ASSOCIATE FOR AFRICA, EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST FOR THE U.S. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, HAS CALLED TO DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVE RESTRICTING RELIGIOUS MEETINGS AND SERVICES TO CHURCH BUILDINGS. PRICHARD HAS PROVIDED COPY OF LETTER SENT BY COMMISSAIRE DE ZONE DE TSHIKAPA (EAST KASAI) TO CHURCH LEGAL REPS IN HIS JURISDICTION TRANSMITTING TEXT OF FEBRUARY 28 ORDER FROM COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS AT KINSHASA TO REGIONAL COMMISSIONER AT KANANGA (AND PRESUMABLY TO OTHER REGIONAL COMMISSIONERS AS WELL). ORDER READS: QTE EN APPLICATION DE LA DECISION PORTANT INTERDICTION REUNIONS QUARTIERS QUE J'AI ANNONCEE A LUBUMBASHI STOP VOUS PRECISE QUE LES' MESSES AMBULANTES DITES AU DOMICILE DES FIDELES ET REGROUPANT LES FIDELES DU

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QUARTIER ETRE INTERDITES STOP DES OFFICES OU MESSES FUNEBRES

CELEBRES DANS LES QUARTIERS ET HORS DES EGLISES ETRE
EGALEMENT INTERDITES STOP TOUS OFFICES RELIGIEUX DE
QUELQUE NATURE QUE CE SOIT DEVOIR SE DEROULER EXCLUSIVEMENT
DANS LES ENDROITS APPROPRIES C'EST A DIRE EGLISES OU
TEMPLES STOP PRESENT MESSAGE ETRE STRICTE APPLICATION
STOP FIN DE CITATION VOUS INVITE A L'EXECUTION FIDELE DE
CETTE INSTRUCTION FULLSTOP UNQTE. TO THIS, COMMISSAIRE
DE ZONE ADDS HIS OWN INJUNCTION: QTE TOUT RASSEMBLEMENT
OU ATTROUPEMENT DES FIDELES EN DEHORS DES EDIFICES ERIGES
POUR LES PRIERES EST STRICTEMENT INTERDIT, PAR CONSEQUENT
PUNISSABLE. LA PRESENTE INSTRUCTION NE DOIT SOUFFRIR
D'AUCUNE NEGLIGENCE DE VOTRE PART UNQTE.

3. PRICHARD SAID RESTRICTIONS ON PLACE OF WORSHIP, IF
CONFIRMED, WOULD CONSTITUTE A CURTAILMENT OF FREEDOM OF
RELIGION ABOUT WHICH U.S. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AND HE
HOPED USG AND OTHER WESTERN GOVERNMENTS, WOULD PROBABLY
FEEL CONSTRAINED TO PROTEST. HE SAID THERE HAS ALREADY
BEEN SOME AGITATION WITHIN PRESBYTERIAN GOVERNING BODY
FOR PROTEST AGAINST NATIONALIZATION OF CHURCH SCHOOLS
BUT THAT HE AND OTHERS HAVE SO FAR BEEN ABLE TO RESIST
THIS WITH ARGUMENT THAT MEASURES INVOLVED NO
RESTRICTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM PER SE. RESTRICTIONS ON
PLACE OF WORSHIP, HOWEVER, WOULD BE ANOTHER MATTER.

4. DEPARTMENT TOLD PRICHARD IT WOULD SEEK CLARIFICATION
OF NEW RESTRICTION FROM EMBASSY, AND PRICHARD IS SO
INFORMING HIS GOVERNING BODY.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY REPORT AND COMMENTS ASAP. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL REPRESSION, CHURCH STATE RELATIONS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 MAY 1975
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE103362
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RRSTRAND:GJB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750155-0867
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750584/aaaaczsftel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <20 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORTED GOZ RESTRICTION OF PLANS OF WORSHIP
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CG, US
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Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006